

Interview with 65 year old white male, Mountain Rest, South Carolina (part 3 of 3) (Transcription)

Q. Any other stories you can tell us about the tunnel itself?

A. I don't know much about it. That old lady told you about what she said happened to those Irishmen.

Q. No, I don't think we heard that one, sir.

A. She said that those Irish people was mean, very mean. Those black Irish, they call them. Back then, she said that everybody had to have a <gap> and they'd move out of <gap> Georgia <gap> and milked a cow with them <gap> around one of those little branches. I know that when I come here to work, I brought her down here to show her before she passed away, but she said that those Irishmen <gap> and said they beat him to death when her mother all she done is shove her head <gap> They killed him there and just beat his body <gap> and said that evening there's a man, a friend come and told her daddy that his family know too much and don't get them that night, and she said that he took her eating table and turned the legs up and put two axles <gap> four little wheels <gap> it was too little to walk on that and he pulled it and her mother was a strong woman and <gap> what she could and it went and crossed <gap> and stayed at a house, their neighbor, and I asked my mother before she died back this winter if she knowd the house and she said she did, that her grandmother stayed in <gap> and she said they come there. Those Irish followed that wagon track and come and would run around and around the house hollaring "bang 'em, bang 'em". They come out to bang 'em and said that made her dead <gap> They had maybe one gun <gap> and everyone that's big enough had a two

Library of Congress

butcher knife or anything they could get <gap> as long as they lived <gap> and said next morning the dad got up <gap> with the military. Had the men and boys trained to fight the Indians and she said to march on <gap> and she said that was the end of the argument. And she said I forget <gap> and she said the line would be solid and then a break in it <gap> but I asked another old lady about the graveyard I found up here and she said boy think nothing about it. Said that's where they bury those Irishmen; said nobody cared for them. He didn't see half of them. When I was a little girl, used to watch my dad's cows when he burnt the woods; that both sides of that mountain was covered in those sunken places where they buried them and said we picked up little gold chains with crosses on them, that's it they wore them around their

Q. Any idea about what period of time this would have been?

A. Well, he had to go to the Civil War and I asked ma if they ever come back to get their things and she said <unintelligible text> got a fellow with a wagon and come back said in my opinion that's how come the <gap> the work to stop on him <gap> I imagine that's what happened. I see'd in that book, that <gap> County book <gap> and according to it, he thought an awful lot of Andrew Picken; he lived over there; he owned the whole country too, the whole plantation in there <gap> across the road there, that highway <gap> I believe he was married or maybe their first child was born when they was both him and his wife both were 16 years old. I believed he weighed over 300 pounds and wasn't fat and would march those troops he had trained, these Scott Irish people <gap> I suspect that's the reason my grandma, these boys back here in the mountains wouldn't know nothing about girls down <gap> Newbury, she come from Newbury. I guess he picked her up on the way back out of there; that's where they got their women; they come down the country. She come from Newbury, <gap> her name was <gap>

Q. What do you think would happen to this area if the railroad had ever come through?

Library of Congress

A. Well, I guess it wouldn't have been quite like it is. It's just been a big town <gap> all up through Clayton, Georgia <gap> and those people that had money was picking up all the land. It would have been worth a whole lot more back then, but they didn't get it. You see, you have to look at it in another way. That was what stopped it. You see to hear them tell <gap> and seeing that many of those Irish come at one time, that looked like half of Ireland to them again and they thought the best thing to do is get rid of them. And you see they cared nothing for civilization. They'd been I guess over in Ireland there was a lot of people, maybe they lived close to people I don't know <gap> they've been persecuted in the old country. And these people come and putting up that Catholic Church and school up here, you know that's <gap> and ma said <gap> that she hear granny talk about 'em catching their kids and holding them up over <gap> And you see they didn't take no such stuff as that <gap> about this railroad; all they done made 'em a little whiskey and rationed and stuff to eat <gap> You see they come here and live with the Indians a long time, the Cherokee people, got along to those French and English ones <gap> that's what happened; that's how come I'm driving to Oklahoma. It wasn't because I didn't like them. <gap> Just down below our house was where the Indian government was, that was a long time. They was living in houses when the white man come right down below where we lived <gap> just up the river and about half way from the hill to the riverbank; that's where it's safe. I picked up Indian relics

there many a time

Q. Would this be on the Georgia side or the South Carolina side?

A. It was on the South Carolina side.

Library of Congress

Q. You'll have to take us there someday.

A. I took a girl up there and showed her maybe a year ago and she made picture. She's making a book about this old church over here you know and nobody didn't know where that house was and I told her that I did, that <unintelligible text> had showed me and I asked him how he know and he said <gap> showed him and <gap> was my great grandad. Me and Louis got him a tombstone or monument <gap> took up to the mountain and put it up before mom died and took her up there and let her see it where her grandpa <gap> They know where he's buried, you know, on top of the mountain, yeah. He lookin' good up there.

Q. What did your people do for religion, and were there churches around?

A. Oh yeah, they was very religious, my mother especially. They was all religious people. You see, people back then depended on God; they weren't like people now, didn't need him; they needed him back then and they used him and he helped them. He told them even ahead of time what was going to happen, yeah, <gap> can tell that, yeah. That's how come my granny had to raise that kid, that girl; her mother went to her and told her that she was gonna die when she wasn't even sick and she asked her how: she says you ain't sick; you ain't gonna die. Says yes, I'm gonna have a kid and gonna die. And says: why do you think that? <gap> and it had a road that come down to it and she said that she seed a coffin and men carrying it, six men, carried it right down there and where it cut down to their house <gap> when that kid was born she died and granny took the kid and raised it. I got her picture up there and my older brother's picture and my sister's picture and them are standing in a row in this old house where I was born before I was even born. Just them three and my granny and my mother. That was even before I was even born. Yeah they knowd things; they depended on God, you see, they <gap> and I remember ma telling me that her grandma <gap> Wouldn't even go to hear them or nothing. You know they

Library of Congress

were bad; some of them I think was Presbyterian, but that's the way they thought. They didn't think nobody was right but them. Now my mother wasn't that way. Probably she had more religion than anybody I'd ever seen. I never heard her say a word, a bad word about nobody as long as I from a kid on up. And when she died my wife wanted to go down and look in her little trunk to see about if she could find some pictures in there that she wanted to see and I see the letter laying there in that trunk and opened that letter and read it and ma never mentioned

<gap> put us down to the very lowest, this woman did and ma went and waited on that woman when she's sick and thought a lot of her done everything she could for her <gap> That's the kind of woman she was. I've never seen nobody like her; I'm kinda like Dr. <gap> was; you just have a definite feeling when you was around. He told me he done everything in the world he could <gap> He operated on her I don't know how many times <gap> He operated on her about 4 1/2, 5 hours in that one time and when I went down to see her them nurses come to me and said to me you know your mother had magic hair? And I said no, I didn't know it. They said she has since we took every pin out of her hair; had that big ball of hair up on her head you know and she went through all that operation and when she come back to her room her hair was just as pretty <gap> and said that's never been done in this hospital before. And then when Mr. Smith's wife was in there he come to me and talk to me about it. He said your mother knowd ahead of time what was going be and I said no <gap> He says I know my wife was a dying and me and my boy both here and said that your ma and her just operated on the day before and the badest shape she's in <gap> she raised up in the bed and called us back told us to go back and stay with her. My wife, she wasn't going to die. She was going to live and so she lived. <gap> we seed her raised up in the bed and watch her and then called us to come back; she wasn't going to die, not then. I've never seen nobody like her. Best woman I know I know I ever seen.

Library of Congress

Q. She obviously brought you up right. If you could would you change anything in your life?

A. Well, I don't think so. I've enjoyed mine now. I can't live the life my mother had, tell you that right now, but I've never mistreated a fellow, I mean not intentionally. <gap> and that way I don't know whether I can change anything you see maybe we not the same type of people my mother was, not all together; we got Indian blood in us and we feel different, you see, if we mistreated I don't know how she felt but we mistreated, you see, it goes hard with us. And my

End M2 A(1)